

## Message Text

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R 131405Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4201  
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME  
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AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
USMISSION USNATO  
DIA WASHDC  
USCINCEUR  
USNMR SHAPE  
USMISSION GENEVA  
USMISSION USUN  
USDEL MBFR VIENNA  
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX  
AMCONSUL LYON  
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE  
AMCONSUL NICE  
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 01120

MLLITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS

GENEVA FOR CCD AND SALT DELS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PARM, MPOL, PINT, FR  
SUBJECT: THE SOCIALIST PARTY DECIDES ON A DEFENSE POLICY

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SUMMARY. THE SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) ADOPTED JANUARY 8 A  
DEFENSE POLICY WHICH ACCEPTS TEMPORARY RETENTION OF THE  
FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCE WHILE MAINTAINING THAT THE ULTIMATE  
GOAL IS RENUNCIATION OF THAT FORCE THROUGH GENERAL  
DISARMAMENT. LABORING UNDER THE HEAVY LOAD OF A LONG  
ANTIMILITARIST HERITAGE, THE PS PRODUCED A SOMEWHAT  
AMBIGUOUS DOCUMENT WHICH REFLECTS THE BASIC DIFFICULTY

IN BEING PATRIOT AND PACIFIST AT THE SAME TIME AND REMAINS FOR THE MOST PART ON THE LEVEL OF GENERALITIES AND STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLE. ON THE MORE PRAGMATIC FRONT, PARTY LEADER MITTERRAND NOTED IN HIS JANUARY 7 SPEECH BEFORE THE CONVENTION THAT THE NUCLEAR FORCE CONSTITUTES PART OF THE "HERITAGE" FOR ANY LEFT GOVERNMENT, LEAVING NO REALISTIC CHOICE OTHER THAN RETENTION IN THE SHORT TERM. HE LIKEWISE RECONFIRMED SOCIALIST ACCEPTANCE OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, SAYING THAT THE "AMERICANS MUST KNOW WE ARE LOYAL ALLIES IN CASE OF WAR" BUT ADDING THAT FRANCE COULD NOT BE AN "INTEGRATED ALLY" LEST IT LOSE ITS AUTONOMY OF DECISION. THE PARTY PLATFORM BACKED UP MITTERRAND, ALTHOUGH WITH LESS PRECISION AND WITH A HEALTHY DOSE OF COMPROMISING LANGUAGE WHICH IS STILL NECESSARY FOR PARTY UNITY. END SUMMARY.

1. A STUDY IN COMPROMISE: MEETING IN PARIS JANUARY 7-8, THE SOCIALIST DEFENSE CONVENTION PRODUCED A DOCUMENT WITH FEW SURPRISES AND A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE, BASED ON THE FOUR CRITERIA AGREED TO IN SEPTEMBER BY THE COMMON PROGRAM NEGOTIATING TEAMS:

- AS THE ULTIMATE GOAL, RENUNCIATION OF ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS;
- VIGOROUS EFFORTS IN QUEST OF GENERAL WORLD DISARMAMENT;
- TEMPORARY RETENTION OF THE FRENCH NUCLEAR

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- FORCE (INCLUDING TECHNOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENT NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN ITS EXISTING LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS), WHILE AWAITING DISARMAMENT;
- ALLOWING THE FRENCH PEOPLE TO MAKE THE FINAL DECISION, AFTER A NATIONAL DEBATE.

HAVING AVOIDED THIS SENSITIVE ISSUE FOR FIVE YEARS, THE PS FINALLY, ALBEIT RELUCTANTLY, LAUNCHED AN EFFORT TO DEVELOP A REAL POLICY IN PLACE OF WHAT MITTERRAND HAD CRITICIZED AS "A SUMMATION OF NEGATIVES." THE PS HAD BEEN VULNERABLE FOR YEARS TO CHARGES OF AMBIGUITY IN THE DEFENSE FIELD AND WAS PLACED EVEN MORE ON THE DEFENSIVE WHEN THE COMMUNISTS OPTED IN FAVOR OF MAINTAINING THE FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCE LAST SPRING. BUT REGARDLESS OF THE POLITICAL DESIRABILITY OF ESTABLISHING A COHERENT DEFENSE POSITION WHICH SUCCEEDED IN PRODUCING NEARLY TOTAL CONSENSUS ON ALL BUT THE THIRD POINT ABOVE AND ADOPTION OF THE FINAL MOTION BY ALMOST 70 PERCENT OF THE DELEGATES, THE CONVENTION DEMONSTRATED HOW DEEPLY THE PS IS DIVIDED ON SOME KEY ISSUES, INCLUDING RETENTION OF THE NUCLEAR FORCE AND ALLIANCE STRATEGY. SO ALTHOUGH THE SOCIALISTS HAVE LAUNCHED THE EFFORT, IT IS FAR FROM COMPLETED.

2. PACIFIST LEGACY: THE DECISION TO RETAIN THE NUCLEAR  
FORCE (THUS MOVING BEYOND ITS STRICT RENUNCIATION IN  
THE COMMON PROGRAM OF 1972) WAS HOTLY CONTESTED BY A  
MINORITY OF THE PARTY WHICH COMBINED:

- TRADITIONAL PACIFISTS;
- THOSE OPPOSED TO THE BOMB ON MORAL GROUNDS

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AMCONSUL NICE  
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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- ("ANTI-NUCLEAIRES");
- AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT THE FRENCH DETERRENT  
IS NOT CREDIBLE AND THUS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS

THAN HAVING NONE AT ALL ("A-NUCLEAIRES").  
ALL THREE FACTIONS REPRESENT A CROSS-SECTION OF THE  
PARTY INCLUDING BOTH MITTERRAND AND LEFT-WING CERES  
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SUPPORTERS, "AUTOGESTIONNAIRES", ECOLOGISTS, MILITANT  
CHRISTIANS AND THOSE ACTIVE IN OPPOSITION TO CIVIL NU-  
CLEAR ENERGY PROGRAMS. ALL ARE ROOTED IN AN ANTIMILI-  
TARIST, PACIFIST HERITAGE WHICH LED ONE SPEAKER TO SAY  
THAT "ONE CANNOT BE SOCIALIST WITHOUT BEING FUNDAMEN-  
TALLY PACIFIST." HE WAS RIGHT EVEN TO THE POINT THAT  
THE SAME HERITAGE WEIGHS TO SOME DEGREE AS WELL ON A  
MUCH LARGER PORTION OF THE PARTY WHICH GRUDGINGLY AC-  
CEPTS TEMPORARY RETENTION OF THE NUCLEAR FORCE FOR  
"REALISTIC" OR "PRAGMATIC" REASONS, BUT WHICH REMAINS  
IDEOLOGICALLY OPPOSED.

3. AMBIGUITIES PREVAIL: IN THE FACE OF SUCH CONFLIC-  
TING OPINION AND IN THE HEAT OF AN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN,  
THE BEST THE PS COULD HOPE FOR WAS A REASONABLE BALANCE  
BETWEEN REALISM AND IDEALISM WHICH WOULD BE AMBIGUOUS  
BY NECESSITY, IF NOT BY DESIGN. MITTERRAND HIMSELF  
SUMMED UP THE SOCIALIST DILEMMA:

- RECOGNIZING CURRENT REALITIES IN THAT "IMME-  
DIATE RENUNCIATION OF THE NUCLEAR FORCE WOULD  
DESTROY THE FRENCH ARMY;"
- WHILE STRESSING THE MANDATORY IDEOLOGICAL  
COMMITMENT ACCORDING TO WHICH "THE PS MUST  
SAY NO TO WAR.....IN FIGHTING FOR THE DISAP-  
PEARANCE OF BLOCS, FOR NON-PROLIFERATION AND  
FOR STOPPING THE ARMS RACE."

THE FINAL DOCUMENT (WHICH WILL APPEAR ABOUT JANUARY 19)  
SHOWS THE SAME AMBIVALENCE IN A NUMBER OF CASES:

- THE PS AGREED TO MAINTAIN THE FRENCH NUCLEAR  
FORCE IN A STATE OF OPERATIONAL READINESS,  
BUT PASSED AN AMENDMENT WHICH QUESTIONS THE  
STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE (COUNTER-VALUE) UPON  
WHICH THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FORCE IS

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- BASED.
- ALTHOUGH DECLARING THEMSELVES READY TO ABAN-  
DON FIRST THE MIRAGE IVS (NO TIME FRAME SPE-  
CIFIED) AND LATER ON THE IRBMS OF THE ALBION  
PLATEAU AS A DEMONSTRATION THEIR COMMITMENT  
TO DISARMAMENT, THE SOCIALISTS CAREFULLY

AVOIDED ANY REFERENCE TO THE REAL HEART OF THE  
FRENCH FORCE, THE NUCLEAR BALLISTIC MISSILE  
SUBMARINES (THUS IMPLYING INDEFINITE RETENTION).

4. ALLIANCE STRATEGY: FACED WITH THE REALITY OF AN  
ARMED AND DIVIDED WORLD, THE SOCIALISTS ONCE AGAIN DE-  
CLARED THEMSELVES FAITHFUL TO FRENCH OBLIGATIONS WITHIN  
THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, BUT RULED OUT (AS DO ALL FRENCH  
PARTIES) ANY IDEA OF REINTEGRATING FRENCH FORCES INTO  
NATO. MITTERRAND HIMSELF SPOKE TO THAT PORTION OF THE  
PARTY WHICH TAKES THE ALLIANCE LESS SERIOUSLY, POINTING  
OUT THAT IT EXISTS FOR MILITARY PURPOSES AND THAT FRANCE  
HAS AN OBLIGATION TO RESPOND MILITARILY WHEN THE SITU-  
ATION SO REQUIRES. "THE AMERICANS MUST KNOW THAT WE ARE  
LOYAL ALLIES IN CASE OF WAR", HE SAID, ADDING THAT  
FRANCE CANNOT LEAVE THE ALLIANCE WITHOUT SOME  
ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENT WHICH CLEARLY DOES NOT EXIST  
TODAY. MITTERRAND'S PERFORMANCE THROUGHOUT THE  
CONVENTION WAS NOTABLE FOR ITS ABSENCE OF ANTI-AMERICAN-  
ISM, ALTHOUGH THE CERES FACTION AGAIN MADE THE US ITS  
FAVORITE WHIPPING-BOY.

5. BUT WHILE FRANCE MUST REMAIN WITHIN THE ATLANTIC  
ALLIANCE AS A PRACTICAL NECESSITY, THE PS IS COMMITTED  
IN THE LONG TERM TO THE SIMULTANEOUS DISSOLUTION OF BOTH  
BLOCS (THUS HARKING BACK TO COMMON PROGRAM LANGUAGE).  
IMPLICITLY RECOGNIZING THE IDEALISTIC NATURE OF THIS  
PROPOSITION, MITTERRAND SAID THAT IN THE MEANTIME FRANCE  
NEED NOT BE A PRISONER OF EXISTING ALLIANCES, BUT SHOULD  
CONTINUE TO STUDY OTHER COLLECTIVE SECURITY POSSIBILI-  
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TIES WITH ITS EUROPEAN PARTNERS AND THE SOVIET UNION  
(A NEBULOUS IDEA REFERRING TO SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE  
TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP PROPOSITION WHICH WAS REAFFIRMED AS  
WELL). ASKING HIMSELF RHETORICALLY WHETHER SUCH POLI-  
CIES WERE COMPLEMENTARY OR CONTRADICTORY, THE PS LEADER  
RESPONDED NO -- AS LONG AS IT IS CLEAR THAT FRANCE IS  
LOYAL, YET NON-INTEGRATED AND PRESERVING ITS AUTONOMY  
OF DECISION.

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6. DISARMAMENT ALL AZIMUTHS: THE TOUCHSTONE OF PS  
DEFENSE POLICY IS A MILITANT COMMITMENT TO DISARMAMENT  
IN ANY SIZE, SHAPE OR FORM. THE SOCIALISTS FAVOR:

-- A WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE IF POSSIBLE, OR  
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AT LEAST A CONVENING OF NUCLEAR POWERS;  
-- SIGNING OF THE NUCLEAR TEST-BAN TREATY;  
-- PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA TALKS AND IN MBFR  
(OUTSIDE OF THE NATO GROUP).  
(MERCIFULLY THERE WAS NO MENTION OF MITTERRAND'S IDEA  
OF A CSCE-TYPE CONFERENCE ON THE EUROPEAN THEATER).  
IN PRIVATE SESSION WITH EMBOFFS ON JANUARY 6, PS DEFEN-

SE SPECIALIST JACQUES HUNTZINGER SAID THAT ONE PURPOSE OF THE CONVENTION WAS TO LAUNCH A DISARMAMENT DEBATE WHICH WOULD RESULT IN A COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSAL BY LATE FEBRUARY, EFFECTIVELY UNDERCUTTING THE HIGHLY PUBLICIZED GOF EFFORT. CONVENTION REPORTER JEAN-PIERRE COT IN FACT USED THE DISARMAMENT THEME AS A MEANS OF DEFUSING ANTI-NUCLEAR OPPOSITION GROUPS, CASTING PS DEFENSE POLICY AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A LARGER DISARMAMENT STRATEGY TO WHICH FEW COULD REALLY OBJECT.

7. CERES OPPOSITION: ALTHOUGH THE CERES MINORITY OF THE PS SUPPORTED THE PARTY MOTION, CERES LEADERS STILL ARGUED THAT IT DID NOT GO FAR ENOUGH IN PRESERVING FRENCH INDEPENDENCE AND RETAINED TOO MUCH OF AN ATLANTICIST FLAVORING. THE CERES AMENDMENT TO THAT END -- THAT FRANCE NOT ACCEPT "HARMONIZATION OF ITS STRATEGY WITH THAT OF THE US...AND PROHIBIT ANY DOCTRINE OF EMPLOYMENT WHICH WOULD LEAD TO AUTOMATIC PARTICIPATION IN A FORWARD BATTLE IN THE HEART OF EUROPE" -- WAS REJECTED BY 71 PERCENT OF THE DELEGATES AFTER A MITTERRAND INTERVENTION CALLING FOR A NEGATIVE VOTE "WITHOUT HESITATION." THE CERES LIKEWISE PROPOSED ADDING THE PLUTON TACTICAL MISSILE TO THE LIST OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO BE ABANDONED (AFTER THE MIRAGE IV FORCE AND THE IRBMS) BUT THAT AMENDMENT WAS LIKEWISE REBUFFED. THE FINAL MOTION ADDRESSED NEITHER THE PLUTON ISSUE NOR THAT OF THE FOR-

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WARD BATTLE CONCEPT.

8. THE DREAM AND THE REALITY: WHILE ADMITTING THAT THE NUCLEAR FORCE MUST BE RETAINED IN THE SHORT-TERM, THE PS CONCLUDED THAT A LEFT GOVERNMENT SHOULD "CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR AN ARMY FOUNDED ON CONVENTIONAL ARMAMENT" WITHIN THE FIVE-YEAR TERM OF ITS LEGISLATURE. AGAIN THE CONVENTION ADDRESSED NO MORE THAN THE GENERAL DESIRES OF THE PARTY, LEAVING ASIDE THE SPECIFICS OF WHAT SUCH "CONDITIONS" MIGHT ENTAIL FOR FRENCH STRATEGY. AND AGAIN AS USUAL THE SOCIALISTS HAVE BEEN ROUNDLY CRITICIZED BY COMMUNISTS AND MAJORITY SPOKESMEN ALIKE FOR EITHER BEING TOO ATLANTICIST OR FAILING TO PROTECT FRENCH INDEPENDENCE BY GIVING UP ELEMENTS OF THE NUCLEAR DETERRENT. THE THRUST OF THE PS POSITION ON THE CONVENTIONAL ARMY, HOWEVER, IS IN KEEPING WITH THE EMPHASIS ON DISARMAMENT -- THE IDEAL SOLUTION FOR FRANCE, IN SOCIALIST EYES, IS A COMPETENT CONVENTIONAL FORCE BASED ON THE STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE THROUGH POPULAR MOBILIZATION, OPERATING IN A MORE PEACEFUL WORLD WHERE NUCLEAR WEAPONS HAVE BEEN CAST ASIDE OR AT LEAST SOMEHOW LIMITED. WHILE THERE ARE THOSE WHO WILL ARGUE FOR SUCH A STRATEGY EVEN

TODAY, A PREPONDERANT MAJORITY OF THE PARTY -- AND CERTAINLY FRANCOIS MITTERRAND -- IS REALISTIC ENOUGH TO SEPARATE THE DESIRABLE FROM THE POSSIBLE. UNFORTUNATELY FOR PS DEFENSE STRATEGY, HOWEVER, IN THE FACE OF AN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN WHERE PARTY UNITY IS CRITICAL, THE POSSIBLE MUST REMAIN VAGUE IN ORDER TO AVOID ANTAGONIZING THOSE WHO LIONIZE THE DESIRABLE.  
HARTMAN

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## Message Attributes

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